Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Secrets of Contentment, Part 2
Scripture: Phil. 4:11–12
Code: A251

Contentment in a Consumer Culture

John MacArthur

2. Satisfaction with Little

Here is another secret to contentment from Paul's life: "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity" (Phil. 4:11–12).

He appreciated the revived generosity of the Philippian church, but wanted them to know he hadn't been coveting it. He kept his wants or desires in check, not confusing them with his needs.

"Not that I speak from want" is another way of saying, "I really don't have any needs that aren't being met." Our needs as human beings are simple: food, clothing, shelter, and godliness with contentment. Scripture says to be content with the bare necessities of life.

That attitude is in marked contrast to the attitude of our culture. People today aren't content—with little or much. My theory is that the more people have, the more discontent they're apt to be. Typically, the most unhappy people you'll ever meet are very wealthy. They seem to believe their needs can never be met. Unlike Paul, they assume their wants are needs. They've followed our materialistic culture's lead in redefining human needs.

You'll never come across a commercial or ad that tells you to eat food, drink water, or go to sleep. Mass media advertises items that are far more optional and discretionary, but you'd never know it from the sales pitch. The appeal isn't, "Wouldn't you like to have this?" but "You *need* this!" If you expose yourself to such appeals without thinking, you'll find yourself needing things you don't even want! The goal of this kind of advertising is to produce discontentment and make a sale.

To protect yourself, pay careful attention to whenever you attach the word *need* to something in your thoughts or speech. Edit any use of it that goes beyond life's bare essentials. Paul did, and you can too. Thankfully regard any surplus as a blessing from God. You will be satisfied with little when you

refuse to depend on luxuries the world redefines as needs.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).